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Helping Old Glory

BY
LILLIAN J. PEARSON



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FRANKLIN, OHIO



DENVER, COLO.

HELPING OLD GLORY

A Three Act Playlet

for Children

By LILIAN J. PEARSON

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—Published by—

ELDRIDGE ENTERTAINMENT HOUSE,
FRANKLIN, OHIO **DENVER, COLO.**

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Fairy Queen Self Sacrifice

Fairy Faith

Fairy Hope

Fairy Charity

Puck Courage

Puck Patience

Puck Endurance

Golden Opportunity

South Wind

Witch of Selfishness (*Who is later changed to Sweet Harmony.*)

Soldier

Sailor

War Duties Red Cross

Food Conservation

Liberty Loan

Mr. Slacker

Mrs. Slacker

Noel (no-ole) Slacker

Little Brother

COSTUMES

Fairy Queen—White tarlatan dress, bedecked with flowers and tinsel. Her crown and wand will carry a large heart pierced with an arrow. She has tiny wings.

FAITH—Blue dress, trimmed with anchors and tinsel. On her crown and wand an anchor. She has tiny wings.

HOPE—White dress, trimmed with stars and tinsel. Her crown and wand carry stars. Tiny wings on her shoulders.

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CHARITY—Red dress, trimmed with hearts of tinsel. Hearts on her crown and wand. Tiny wings.

PUCKS—Bright green, red, brown or yellow overall suits with feet and hoods to them. The hood and toes will be long and pointed. They should be wired and curled back. Pucks carry tiny green baskets and have anklets of small bells.

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY—Dressed in a fairy dress of gold or yellow, and sparkling with tinsel. On her crown a golden key and instead of a wand she carries a large golden key. She has tiny wings.

SOUTH WIND—In clinging grey costume with rainbow colored chiffon scarf, draped and fluttering as she walks. She should be the tiniest girl. She has no speaking part.

SELFISHNESS—Wears a ragged black cape to conceal her white gown. On her head is a pointed witch hat, with a white frill under the brim. She wears an ugly frowning false face.

SOLDIER—Khaki soldier uniform. Carries a gun.

SAILOR—A sailor suit. Carries a coil of rope.

RED CROSS—Red Cross nurse's uniform. She carries a basket of bandages, scissors, etc.

FOOD CONSERVATION—Conservation uniform of apron and cap, carries one basket of fruit and vegetables and one of canned fruit.

LIBERTY LOAN—Costume similar to Puck's but though he will have a "green back," the front of his costume should be yellow, to represent gold. On his back a yellow \$, on the front a green \$. He will carry two bags, one jingling with coins, the other almost empty.

MR. SLACKER—Beard and mustache, overalls, blue flannel shirt, heavy boots, wide straw hat.

MRS. SLACKER—Is a little white-haired, worried looking woman, who wears large spectacles, a little lace cap, kerchief, apron, etc.

Noel—A typical country boy, overalls, wide straw hat, etc.

LITTLE BROTHER—Ordinary play clothes.

SCENE I.

A Fairy Glade

(Sound of distant music which gradually gets louder, until the fairies and pucks come dancing in. They sing, to the tune of Rubenstein's "Melody in F." Pucks come in turning somersaults and handsprings.)

Pucks and Fairies.

Come, Fairies, come, there is work we must do,
Come, little Pucks, for you must help too!
Our country's calling, to one and to all—
Never let Freedom fall!

There's not a person in all this land of Freedom
To whom the call does not come in stirring tone;
Come, be prepared, won't you stand by your
country?

Who could resist such a plea from their own?
Come, then, be merry, be cheerful and bright,
Ready and willing to work or to fight.
Our Queen will give us a task each to do,
We'll do her bidding true!

Hope. (Holding up her wand in her right hand, and putting the index finger of her left hand to her lips.)

Hush, our gracious Queen is near;
She'll be glad to find us here.

(Enter the Fairy Queen. Fairies curtsey, Pucks turn around three times, then stand with their backs to her, place their hands on their knees, bob their heads suddenly, and peep at her between their legs.)

Queen.

Good, my sprites; I knew you'd be
All on hand to welcome me.
One dance we'll have, and then to work,
For Pucks and Fairies never shirk!

(While Fairies dance, Pucks lie on their backs and shake their anklet bells in time to the music. At end of dance Queen ascends green throne in back center of stage and seats herself.)

Queen.

Be seated, sprites, I wish to tell
What tasks are now in store

For each of you, since our dear land
Has entered into war.
The mothers brave, sweethearts and wives,
The friends and fathers, each
Must learn self-sacrifice, and that
Is what *I* have to teach.
Faith! Go you forth through every state,
Make every home more bright;
Keep heart and spirit strong and brave,
Give trust in God and Right!

Faith.

Oh, Queen, I go to do your will;
I'll strive to banish doubt,
And plant firm Faith in every heart,
This glorious land throughout!

(Exit Faith)

Queen.

And Hope, sweet shining Hope, go forth,
Give Light to all you meet!

Hope.

Fair Queen, I go with happiness,
On eager, willing feet!

(Exit Hope)

Queen.

Now Charity! Your task is great!

Charity.

Dear Queen, 'tis one I love—
To help and comfort suffering ones—
A task, all tasks above!

(Exit Charity)

Queen.

My Pucks are ready, too, I see,
To help their Mother Land.

(Pucks rise and stand before Queen)

Courage.

Indeed we are! With eagerness
Await we your command!

Queen.

Then go! Endurance, Patience, too,
And Courage, need I tell

What lessons you must teach this day?
Work steadily and well!

Courage.

I go! With tales of bravery
My basket first I'll fill!

(*Courage fills his basket with leaves*)

Patience.

And I with Patience now set forth!

Endurance.

And I with dauntless Will!

(*Exit Pucks, dancing*)

(*Queen rises and waves her wand three times, calling softly:*) Yo ho! Yo ho! Yo hee!

Queen.

Come, Golden Opportunity,
Your country needs you, too.

(*Enter Golden Opportunity*)

Golden Opportunity.

I'm at its service and at yours;
What would you have me do?

Queen.

Upon our country's "Duty Tree,"
Has grown a branch of War.
'Tis gnarled and ugly, bent and black,
With many a crimson scar.
But on it grow five precious fruits,
For each American true,
Go, offer them to every home—
That's all that you can do.

(*Martial music. Enter little Soldier, marching stiffly. He salutes Queen and stands at attention at her right.*)

Queen.

See! Here's the call to arms, to fight
On land, and keep us free!

(*Music, "Sailor's Hornpipe." Enter little Sailor, dancing. He salutes Queen and stands at attention at her left.*)

While here's another, much the same,
To guard us on the sea.

(*Enter Red Cross*)

This Duty is the Good Red Cross.

(Enter Food Conservation)

Food Conservation, she!

(Enter Liberty Loan, jingling his money bag.)
And here, a Duty for us all,
The Loan to Liberty!

Golden Opportunity.

Good Queen, I go! I'll do my best;
I'll knock at every heart,
And surely no true citizen
Could bid these all depart!

(Tableau. Music, "Star Spangled Banner." Red Cross, Liberty Loan and Food Conservation grouped on steps of throne. Golden Opportunity well forward right. Soldier and Sailor stand stiffly as before. Other three Duties and Golden Opportunity stretch out their arms to the audience.)

CURTAIN

SCENE II .

The Front Yard of Mr. Slacker's Home

(Before curtain rises, there is a sound of a postman's whistle, then the sound of someone running across the stage. Curtain rises, disclosing Witch of Selfishness sitting on doorstep, crooning to Little Brother. Enter Noel, walking in slowly, reading a newspaper. He sits on the woodpile, still absorbed. Mr. Slacker appears in the doorway.)

Mr. Slacker. (Crossly.)

Here, Noel, get to work, my boy!
Now put that paper down.
And do it cheerfully, too, you have
No reason so to frown.

Noel.

Please, Dad! I want to see the news.
Our boys are in the fight;
Already some have fallen—

(Mr. Slacker seizes the papers.)

Noel.

Dad!

Mr. Slacker. (very angrily.)

Indeed? Well serves them right!
They had no business going there—
This war is Europe's own!
When Germans cross the ocean 'twill
Be time for us to moan!
Now get to work! Forget the War—
It can't hurt you or me.

Noel.

But, listen, Dad. Why can't we help
To make those countries free?

Mr. Slacker.

Huh! Free indeed! How could you help
In settling up their fuss?
You'd like as not be killed or maimed—
What good would that do us?

(Noel starts to speak)

Be still, I say! No more of War!
But work with all your might—

(Enter Mrs. Slacker)

Mrs. Slacker. (Timidly)

Well, really, Father, I'm not sure
But what the boy is right!

(Selfishness draws close to Mrs. Slacker.)

Selfishness.

Ah, Mrs. Slacker, think, I pray,
Before you give consent.
To let him go. Some day, I'm sure
You'd such an act repent.
Think what you've suffered for your son
And what you now deserve;
It's time for him to give his life
His Dad and you to serve.
He owes *you* love, his duty first
Is to his family.
There's work for him to do at home—
Why let him cross the sea?
Think how you'd watch and wait for news!
Think how you'd worry, too!
The country doesn't own your boy—
He just belongs to you!

Mr. Slacker. (Explosively)

She's right! Your duty's here, my son.
Your notions are absurd!
Do not breathe discontent again—

Noel.

But—

Mr. Slacker.

Be quiet! Not a word! *(He stamps into the house, carrying the newspaper with him. Noel sits down and begins to shell corn. Mrs. Slacker wavers, starts toward him, but Selfishness wags her finger at her, and she slowly and sadly follows her husband. Selfishness gives a cackling chuckle and returns to doorstep drawing Little Brother close. Enter Golden Opportunity.)*

Golden Opportunity.

Good morning, Dame, I hope you're well
This bright and sunny day.

Selfishness.

I'm never well! What brings you here?
Make haste and have your say.
But let me tell you here and now,
You needn't stay about!
We're busy folk, with all our woe,
Our worries, care and doubt.
I'm kept so busy all the time,
I don't know where to turn;
I'm nurse-maid, servant, cook and boss;
My wages well I earn!

Golden Opportunity.

Is Mr. Slacker home today?
I want to see him too.
And Mrs. Slacker and the boys—
I've news for all of you.

(Golden Opportunity knocks at the door)

Mr. Slacker. (Gruffly, from within.)

Who comes a-knocking at my door?
I'll not go out to see!

Golden Opportunity.

Oh, do come out, Sir Slacker ,I'm
Your Opportunity !

Mr. Slacker comes out, muttering. He is followed by his frowning wife.)

Mr. Slacker.

A golden opportunity ?
Pray what have you in store ?

Golden Opportunity.

I've little homeless Duties five,
The Children of our War !

(She beckons and the children come forward from behind the trees, and stand timidly behind her.)

Mr. Slacker.

Our war, you say ? 'Tis no such thing !
It's fought across the sea.
I'll not get mixed in foreign scraps—
It's not affecting me !

Soldier. (Coming forward eagerly)

Oh, man, do listen to the call !
Your country's calling you !

Sailor.

Aye, listen, Sir ! Please heed the call !

Noel. (Running to his father.)

Yes ! Let me go, Dad ! Do !

Mr. Slacker.

Stand back, my son ! You do not know
What folly you propose !

Mrs. Slacker.

Yes, boy, it's nonsense so to rave ;
Your Dad your duty knows !

Red Cross. (Advances pleadingly to Mrs. Slacker)

But won't you take me in, dear friends ?

Food Conservation.

And let me live here, too ? *(Selfishness wags her finger threateningly at Mrs. Slacker)*

Mrs. Slacker.

I'll no such thing ! With my two boys
I've all that I can do !

Golden Opportunity. (To Mr. Slacker)

Well, if you will not let your boy
Heed calls he feels his own,
You'll surely help us to support
With gold, our Freedom's Loan?

Mr. Slacker.

I'll surely not! I have no gold
To spare for such as he!

Golden Opportunity.

Then long farewell—I'll knock no more!
You'll have to come to me! (Exit *Golden Opportunity and the Five Duties*, while *Mr. and Mrs. Slacker and Selfishness hold Noel back.*)

CURTAIN

SCENE III.

A Fairy Glade

(*Witch Selfishness hobbles in, Fairies and Pucks, the Five Duties and Golden Opportunity come dancing in and form a circle around her. They join hands and dance about her, singing.*)

SONG

(To Melody in F)

Come, Fairies, come, here is work we must do;
Come, little Pucks, for you must help too!
See what a frown she is wearing the while,
We'll teach her soon to smile.

(Enter Queen)

Queen.

Stay, elfins, not so fast, I pray,
You must not tease the dame,
But let her free—

(*Pucks and fairies stand back*)

Now tell me, do,
Whence came you? What's you name?

Selfishness.

I'm Selfishness, I'll have you know.
I live beyond the wood.
And more than that I will not tell—
No reason why I should!

Queen.

Ah, that accounts for ugly frowns,
Now those will quickly banish.
Self-sacrifice I am, you see,
I make black looks all vanish.
My Fairies, here's a task for you,
A magic touch I'll give
That you may change the frowns to smiles,
And make her love to live. *(Queen waves her wand three times over the heads of Faith, Hope and Charity. Fairies join hands again and sing)*
Oh happy day, oh happy day!
We'll change her to a smiling fay!

Faith. *(Waves her wand over Selfishness, and advancing, unfastens the frowning face and removes it, saying:)*

Now first I'll take these frowns away.
I'll give her Faith, so she
Will see the good in everything,
And help her friends to see.

Hope. *(Waves her hand. Selfishness crouches down. Hope removes the Witch's hat and places a shining crown on her head. The Fairies and Pucks crowd close. Hope again waves her wand, Selfishness unfastens her ragged cape and stands up, transformed into a beautiful smiling Fairy, in a gown of pure white.)*

I place upon your head a crown
Of Hope—a shining light,
And change your gown of dismal black
To one of purest white.

Charity. *(Coming forward and placing about the neck of Selfishness a large red heart on a silver cord)*

I give a heart brimful of love,
And noble thoughts and true;
'Twill make you happy, for 'twill bring
So many friends to you.

Queen.

And since we've altered you so much,
Your name, too, we must change;
From now, Sweet Harmony you'll be—
At first 'twill seem quite strange.

(Music. Harmony's dance of joy.)

My elves, we've other tasks to do.
We'll toil till day is done.
As yet, no dew or lily bells—
Our work's but well begun.
Across the wood a farmer dwells,
His heart is hard and cold;
To teach him Duty we must try.
I'll now my plan unfold;
I'll send the South Wind over there

(Enter Little South Wind)

She is a coaxing fay,
She'll lead him forth to wander here,
'Tis such a glorious day.
And then, when he is near enough
To hear us we will tell
Just what the Stars and Stripes stand for,
And Freedom, too, as well.
'Twould surely soften any heart
To see our flag being made,
Now go, sweet breeze, and send him here
To wander in our glade.
While Selfishness did rule his home
His faults we could not cure,
But now she's one with us, we'll find
He's not so hard, I'm sure.

(Exit South Wind)

*(Fairies, Pucks, Golden Opportunity and Duties, all
assume listening attitudes—footsteps approach)*

Queen. (In a loud whisper)

Hark! I hear him coming now! *(All pretend not
to hear the coming visitors, who enter and stop
amazed at sight of the fairy folk. Mr. and Mrs.
Slacker and the two sons stand quietly behind
the Queen's throne and listen intently.)*

Queen. (Aloud to Hope)

See! Hope, what have you there?

*Hope. (Advancing with a handful of white fluttering
stripes)*

Dear Queen, the good and holy thoughts,
And strong sweet hopes, I bear,
Of men and women, boys and girls.
Americans everywhere.

Queen.

Good! Place them here upon this rock;
How many can there be?

Hope.

I've banded them together, thus,
And so have six, you see.

Queen.

Charity, what is that you hold?

Charity.

'Tis loving thoughts and brave
That beat in hearts throughout the land,
Where Freedom's flag does wave.

(She waves her seven crimson stripes, while speaking, and places them between the white ones.)

Faith. *(Advancing and waving a blue square.)*

And I bring Faith, so pure and strong
It surges through the land;
It arms our boys for any foe;
Ennobles, makes them grand. *(She places the blue in place with the red and white stripes, to form the foundation of "Old Glory.")*

Queen.

And what have you, my merry Pucks,
What gleaming white array?

Courage.

These, Queen, are tears of pride and pain,
Shed silently today.
They mingled with the beaming smiles
Of Faith, Hope, Charity,
And changed to stars of priceless worth—
They'll float for Liberty!

(The "Star Spangled Banner" should be played while the Fairies are building the flag. The Pucks empty their baskets, a shower of stars, which the Fairies arrange on the blue ground. The Queen waves her wand over the flag, and Faith and Charity arise, with a flag held between them. The flag they hold up will not, of course, be the one they were arranging from the separate pieces, but there is the illusion that it is. One star will have a blue patch over it, to give the effect of one star being missing.)

Queen.

We've gathered in the very best
From people far and wide,
And now we bind them all in one,
To make our Country's pride.

(All salute the flag.)

Queen. (In a shocked voice.)

But see, as yet 'tis not complete!
One shining star we lack!
Someone withholds what should be given—
Ah, who could be so slack?
Now Opportunity, did you
Go visit every one?

Golden Opportunity.

Yes, Queen, at every heart I knocked;
My task was carefully done!

*Noel Slacker. (Steps forth despite the angry gestures
of his parents, and speaks boldly.)*

Fair Queen, I fear 'tis we who hold
That other shining star!
For nothing have we done or given
To help in our great War!

Mrs. Slacker. (Coming forward slowly)

Alas, 'tis so, 'Im most ashamed
To think how we've behaved,
Unpatriotic, selfish, slack,
No sorrows shared or saved.
To see those stripes of red and white,
That patch of noble blue,
Those lustrous stars, and then to think
Of what they stand for, too,
Just makes me tremble to begin
To take my share of pain;
To give the best I have to give,
And help "World Freedom" gain.
I want to feel that I belong
And of our flag own part.
I want to add that missing star,
E'en though it breaks my heart.
So go, my son, I'm willing, if
Your father will consent.

Mr. Slacker.

I do, I do! My heart was hard,
But now I do repent.
My boy, a word before you go:
A big man is the one
Who mercy shows to fallen foe;
Or, smiles to face a gun.
And never let the lust of War
Mist o'er the light of truth,
Remember, though you're far from home,
The high ideals of youth.
Then go, my son, be fully armed
To serve your native sod,
And through it all, be true to these:
Yourself! Your Flag! And God!

Noel.

Dear parents, from my heart I give
Sincerest thanks to you,
And pray that I may keep your love
And prove I'm worthy to.

(While Noel has been speaking, Faith has removed the covering from the last star and when Noel suddenly notices it, he points at it, and cries out eagerly)

Look! Look! The Star! The last white star
Is shining bright and clear!
A staff on which to raise our flag—

(He seizes Mr. Slacker's walking stick, and fastening Old Glory to it, he waves it on high, crying)

Now greet it! Cheer on cheer!

(Little soldier stands on one side of Noel, and sailor on the other. Fairies, Pucks, Duties, etc., cheer, "Hip, hip, hurrah!" three times. South Wind runs in, with fluttering scarf and waves her arms.)

Faith.

Blow, Little South Wind, let it wave
And flutter, glad and free!
The bravest flag that ever waved
For Right and Liberty!

Little Brother. (Running forward)

I want to be a soldier, too!

Mrs. Slacker.

No, dear, you're quite too small
To go to war. You'll do your bit
At home. More duties call.
See, here are two we'll take with us

*(She holds out her arms to Red Cross and Food
Conservation, who joyfully respond)*

They'll give us work, all right,
And we'll be soldiers brave and true,
E'en though we do not fight.

Harmony.

And let me live with you and help,
I'm Selfishness, you see,
Our Queen, Self-sacrifice, has changed
Me into Harmony.

Mr. Slacker.

A Golden Opportunity
Knocked at my door today,
And offered me my chance, but I
Just sneered and turned away.
I would that I might have again
That Opportunity.

Golden Opportunity.

You may—I said I would not knock
But you could come to me.
I'm always ready, close at hand
For those who wish to speak,
So, if at first they let me pass,
They'll find me if they seek.

Mr. Slacker.

And may I have another chance,
Since I have wiser grown,
To help my Country, put my gold
Into the Liberty Loan?

Liberty Loan.

Indeed you may! I'd like to go
And live at home with you.
I'll help you when I'm grown up
And help your small son too.

Queen.

Dear friends, you've answered worthily
Your Country's rousing call.
I hope that all may serve as well,
The big folks and the small.

(To audience)

We've not enough e'en yet, for these
Will need support of steel;

(To Fairy folk)

So come, my Elfins, let us plead
For help, make strong appeal!
We need more men and money too,
To help us win our fight.
Old Glory firm must ever stand
For Freedom, Justice, Right!

(All characters join in singing "The Appeal." If a house program is printed it is well to print the words and have the audience join in the song.)

THE APPEAL

(Music, "My Country 'Tis of Thee

In foreign lands afar
Our boys are going to war
For God and Right.
Many the hearts that ache,
With every beat they take,
The sacrifice they gladly make,
For God and Right.

Sweet pain each crimson scar
Won in "World Freedom's War,"
For God and Right.
Brave boys, our Nation's pride,
Nobly have fought—and died.
They bore Old Glory far and wide
For God and Right!

When they have paid the price,
Made the great sacrifice
For Liberty,

(The Fairy folk stretch out their arms to the audience.)

Who'll stand in readiness
Onward like them to press?
Who'll still advance with steadiness
For Liberty?

CURTAIN



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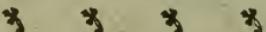
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